

NURSERY ADMISSIONS POLICY



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Signed Jo Stanley-Bell Chair of Local Governing Committee	

Grace Cook Nursery Admissions Policy

Orwell Multi Academy Trust (OMAT) is the admission authority and has responsibility for setting these admission arrangements and for making decisions regarding admissions applications to Nursery classes in trust schools. In setting this policy we have noted the principles outlined in the DfE School Admissions Code, the 2010 Equality Act and the Statutory Guidance for LAs, Early Education and Childcare.

These admission arrangements aim to ensure that:

- practices and criteria used to decide the allocation of nursery places are fair, clear and objective
- parents can clearly understand how places have been allocated
- oversubscription criteria are reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation
- arrangements do not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group or a child with a disability or SEN
- parents are not discouraged from applying for a place because of other school policies
- arrangements include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated.

If there is unexpectedly high demand, we will let Suffolk Early Years and Childcare Service know and work with them to support parents to find places in the locality for their children. If there is an increase in the demand for places the Trust may decide it is possible to increase the number of nursery places at the start of the following term in order to accommodate children on the waiting list or to reduce the places if there is a very low demand.

Rationale

We believe that all young children should have an equal opportunity to access high quality, Early Years Education. To ensure all stakeholders understand our commitment to equalities and fairness we believe there needs to be clarity with regard to the priorities, criteria and procedures for allocating places at Grace Cook Nursery.

This policy outlines the arrangements into Grace Cook Nursery only. **Admission into the Nursery does not guarantee a child a Reception place at Grace Cook Primary School; a separate application for a Reception place must be made to Suffolk County Council, who will allocate your child a Reception place for the September after their 4th birthday.** Please see our separate Admissions Arrangements, available from the school office or website, for further information on how to apply for a Reception place.

Aims

- To have a fair and consistent process for allocating places.
- To ensure all applicants are equally valued and that families are able to express their and their children's needs.

Application Process

Parents/carers are welcome to apply for a place at Grace Cook Nursery at any point in the year. When a parent/carer contacts the school enquiring about a place for their child in the Nursery, the administration process will be explained. They will be

informed whether there is currently a place available for their child and/or when a place may become available. If a place is available, the parent/carer will be invited to visit the Nursery; if the parent/carer agrees to abide by all the terms and conditions of administration, including the fees and arrangements for payment, they will be asked to arrange a home visit and free induction visit/s, and a start date for the child will be agreed.

If places are available, children can be admitted to the Nursery at the start of the term following their second or third birthday.

Parents who would like a part-time place (claiming only 15 hours funding over 5 days) are asked to state a preference for morning or afternoon. However, the nursery may need to take account of the balance between morning and afternoon places so it may not always be possible to fulfil all parents' requests.

Parents will need to accept the place offered in writing (via email confirmation) and will be asked to provide their child's birth certificate and proof of address.

Home visits will be carried out, with the agreement of the parents, prior to a child taking up their place. Parents will also be asked to bring their child for a visit to the Nursery setting prior to the child starting, to meet staff and familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.

Offer of Places

- The offer of places for September will take place in June.
- The offer of places for January will take place in November.
- The offer of places for April will take place in February.

In most circumstances, the school aims to have termly admissions in order to minimise disruption and to support induction arrangements. However, if spaces are available, children **may** be admitted at any point during the term following their second or third birthday.

Unsuccessful applicants will be considered with the next group of applications and kept on a waiting list.

Available Sessions

Free Universal Entitlement for 2 Year olds

- 15 hours Free Childcare for 2 year olds – to find out if you are eligible go to [How to claim 15 hours free childcare including how to get your code - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Early Education for eligible children aged 2

- Targeted offer of 15 hours per week for the most vulnerable 2-year-old children, whose families meet the criteria. Available from the term after the child's 2nd birthday.
- Parents/Carers of children who wish to access a free 2-year-old place should apply to the Local Authority (Suffolk) who will confirm eligibility.
- If the child is eligible, the Local Authority will inform Grace Cook Nursery and provide the parent/carer with a 'Golden Ticket'.

- Once we have received authorisation from the Local Authority or received the 'Golden Ticket', we will make contact with the parent/carer to discuss and offer places if available
- If there is not a place available the child's name and details will be added to a waiting list and children on the waiting list will be admitted in date of birth order, no earlier than the term after the child's second birthday as this is when funding is allocated.

Free Universal Entitlement – 3 and 4 year olds

- 15 hours per week, term time only, available from the term after the child's third birthday.
- Parents can register their child for a place at Grace Cook Nursery from their 1st birthday, by completing a Nursery registration form.
- All registrations to be considered and places offered to children will follow the criteria outlined below.
- Children who are three and four will be offered 15 free hours of nursery education, term time only, subject to availability from the term after their third birthday.
- Parents will be notified of their child's nursery school place in June (September start), November (January Start), February (April Start).
- Places will be filled across the year if available, in accordance with this Admission Policy.

Free Extended Entitlement – 30 hours per week, term time only, available from the term after the child's third birthday for families who meet the following criteria:

- Both parents must be working – or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family.
- Each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.
- Each parent must have an annual income of less than £100,000.
- One/both parent(s) is away on leave (parental, maternal etc.) or one/both parent(s) is on Statutory sick pay.
- Parents on zero-hours contracts will be eligible, as are those who are registered as self-employed.
- One parent is employed, and the other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability; is a foster carer with their own three-and four-year-old children.
- To register eligibility for a 30hr Nursery Place parents must register on-line at <https://childcaresupport.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>
- Only a valid 30 Hour Code will guarantee the funding of the extended 15hrs under this entitlement and it is the parent(s)/carer(s) responsibility to provide this.
- Parents will be asked to renew their 30 Hours Code **every 3 months**.
- The nursery will not hold a place for a child whose parent/carer is still 'applying' or 're-applying' or has lost their eligibility code.

- HMRC will prompt parents by email or text 4 weeks and then 2 weeks before, to renew their 30 Hours Code if they have not reconfirmed their eligibility.
- If a 30 Hours Code cannot be renewed, or the parent chooses not to renew the code, after 6 weeks the code will enter a 'grace period'. This is a short period of time in which extended 15 hours can still be offered by the nursery.
- When the grace period lapses the place will revert to a universal 15 hour place. If the place is filled by the time the code is refreshed/renewed a further 30hr place can be refused.

The financial sustainability of Grace Cook Nursery is essential and therefore, we reserve the right to fill any vacant spaces.

Charged Day Care Invoicing

- To confirm registration, we require a £30.00 non-refundable registration fee. This will be charged at the point of application to confirm registration and hold the place.
- Invoices are sent out on the first day of each month for the forthcoming month.
- Any extra sessions / hours will be added to the invoice for the next calendar month.
- Fees are due regardless of non-attendance – holidays and illness.
- If siblings attend the nursery from one family a 10% discount is given to the oldest child.
- Fees are reviewed regularly, and one month's notice will be given of any changes.
- A full month's notice in writing is required if parents/carers wish to remove their child from the nursery. In the absence of such notice a full month's fees must be paid.
- Refunds are not given under any circumstances.

Notice period for government funded sessions

- We ask parents to make a termly commitment to Grace Cook Nursery as signed in the (PAF) declaration form.
- If parents/carers decide to move their child mid-term, the funding will remain with Grace Cook Nursery until the end of that term – this may affect the transfer of the child to a new Nursery.

Notice period for paying day care

- The notice period for changes to contract or termination of contract is 1 month and must be put in writing to the Nursery Lead Practitioner.

Bank Holidays

- Bank holidays are not funded by Suffolk County Council.
- If the free entitlement falls on a bank holiday, we are not able to swap the day for the day missed.

- The nursery is closed on every bank holiday and fee-paying parents are not charged for this day.

Start dates

- Children's start dates are arranged to meet each child/family's individual needs.
- The start date will take into account our settling procedures which have been developed to ensure all children are feeling safe and happy to be left, feel calmed by their key person and are able to be alongside other children and access their learning environment.
- Children may not receive their full free entitlement during this period.

Oversubscription criteria

When the Nursery is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan naming the nursery, priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in the following priority order:

1. Looked after children (children in care) and previously looked after children (children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became a subject to child arrangements order or special guardianship order, immediately following having been looked after).
2. Children who are the subject of a recognised child protection plan (under current legislation and drawn up by social care services) where a specific nursery placement is identified.
3. Children of staff employed at OMAT at the time of the child's admission to the Nursery.
4. The number of regular sessions requested per week, from highest to lowest.
5. The length of time required within the Nursery setting, i.e. a child requiring three terms would be given priority over a child requiring one term.
6. Date of birth, from oldest to youngest.
7. Siblings of pupils who are already at the nursery or who have already been offered a place, and who will still be there at the time of admission. Priority will be given, where necessary, to applications where there is the smallest age gap. If you have more than one child at the Nursery, please name your youngest child on the application form.
8. Children who reside closest to the Nursery as the crow flies
9. In the unlikely event that two applicants competing for a single place at the nursery meet the above criteria identically, random allocation will be used. The random allocation process will be independently supervised.

Definitions of terms used

Sibling

Where the child has a sibling in the school or a sibling has already been offered a place at the school, and where the sibling will still be attending the school at the time of admission. The term 'sibling' includes: natural, half, step and adopted brothers and sisters; a child of the partner of the parent/carer; and children who are fostered into the family. In all these cases, the child and their sibling will both be living at the same address (that is where the child is ordinarily resident) in a single family unit. This means that children from different family units, where those separate families are living together at the same address, are not considered siblings under this criterion.

Ordinarily resident

By ordinarily resident, we mean the place where your child usually lives. We consider this to be where they sleep overnight. We may need proof of this address. If you use another address to give the impression that your child lives at a different address to where they are ordinarily resident, such as a second home or a grandparent's address, so that you have a higher priority for a place in the Nursery, we will consider this to be a fraudulent application. Where a child lives at two or more addresses, each for part of the week, the address at which the child is ordinarily resident will be considered to be the address that the child lives at for most of the week (excluding weekends and school holidays). Separate evidence in writing from each parent must be provided to confirm the child's living arrangements at the time of application.

In cases where the child spends an equal proportion of the school week at two or more different addresses, evidence of which is to be considered the main contact address will be required to support the application. Agreement in writing by the parents will be required to state which address is to be used as the ordinarily resident address. The address will then be used when processing all school preferences expressed. It is not acceptable to use one address for one school preference and another address for another school preference.

If we are aware of a parental dispute affecting the application, we may not be able to deal with the application and you may need to seek independent legal advice in order to resolve the matter.

Catchment area

- This is the area the Nursery serves. Your child is not guaranteed a place at their catchment area school.
- Catchment area maps are available online at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/catchmentmaps
- If you live near to a boundary line on the map, please check your address against the catchment area parish/village and street lists for towns at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissionstoschools.
- If you would like a copy of the map or list sent to you, or you are unsure of your catchment area, please call the Admissions Team on 0345 600 0981.

Twins, triplets and other multiple births

If the final place available in the Nursery is offered to a twin, triplet or other multiple births and the remaining sibling/s would ordinarily be refused, we will offer places to the remaining sibling/s in the Nursery, provided that the necessary staffing can be put in place in order to comply with statutory staff: pupil ratios.

Waiting lists

If you apply for a place in the Nursery and you are refused, your child's name will automatically be placed on a waiting list. Names are placed on the waiting list in the priority order set out in our admissions oversubscription criteria (above).

The order of children does not remain static - as circumstances change, a child's place on the waiting list can go up or down, for example due to withdrawals or additional applications. If you change your address while your child is on a waiting list, you must let us know. Please be aware that this may change your child's position on the waiting list. Written evidence of this will be required.

General

Wherever possible, we will try to give your child a place at our nursery. Sometimes we may be able to offer you a place but the exact sessions you have requested may not be available. If this is the case, we will let you know, and we can discuss what we can offer. If there are no places available, we will add your child's name to our waiting list. We would also advise you to contact the Family Information Service on 0345 60 800 33 who will be able to support you to find a place for your child. Sometimes there are fewer places than the number of children wanting them.

Since places in the Nursery are limited, parents are advised that a poor record of attendance without good cause, may lead to their child's place being offered to someone else. If this becomes a possibility parents will be notified of this before any action is taken.

For parents who request a delay in their child's admission in to school, the following will be taken into account:

- Your views on what would be a suitable education to meet your child's needs;
- The non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on the admission of summer born children;
- The views of your child's current Nursery School, Grace Cook Nursery and
- The view of the Headteacher of Grace Cook Primary School.

Our setting is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at all times and expects everybody working within this setting to share commitment.